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WOMAN SUFFRAGE OPPOSED TO WOMAN'S RIGHTS

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Equal suffrage awaits a trial. Woman suffrage as tried in the United States is the most unequal division of responsibilities imaginable. The voting woman has retained most of the special rights and exemptions accorded her under man-made laws, while she has failed to discharge the obligations which the voting man assumes with the elective franchise. The vote of the man is a sort of contract to support the verdict of the ballot box, if need be, by the jury box, the cartridge belt, the sheriff's summons. The voting woman is exempt from these obligations. She is a privileged voter. While she may have political power, she does not have political control. Stability of government demands that the control of government should remain in the hands of those who can be held responsible for results. Frederick Harrison cautions us that "Men, and men only, are entitled to political control since, in the last resort, it is their muscular force which has to make good and defend it."

Certainly it is unequal suffrage while women retain the exemptions demanded by their physical nature, and exercise political power without political responsibility. Such inequalities menace the stability of the state. Some venturesome enthusiasts declare that women wish no special rights, no special laws, but wish to be treated "exactly as the men are." But such consistency as this is rare; it would be a brutal interpretation of woman's rights to insist that the hard-won body of legislation, which protects woman because she is the potential mother, be abolished and the vote given to woman in exchange. Yet this and this only is *equal* suffrage. "To treat women exactly as men" is to deny all the progress through evolution which has been made by an increasing specialization of function. Woman suffrage in its last analysis is a retrogressive movement toward conditions where the work of man and woman was the same because neither sex had evolved enough to see the wisdom of being a specialist in its own line.

Reform work, welfare work, desirable and necessary though they may be to offset the results of faulty education, are not the sole end of government. Legislation dealing with these measures responds to the pressure of public opinion which woman, the educator, supreme factor in the social order, dominates. But government is not reform legislation. In the last analysis government is concerned with the protection of persons and property. It is well for us in these days of fantastic legislation, of the promulgation of unenforced and unenforceable laws to recall Thomas Jefferson's dictum that a democracy ceases to be such when those who make the laws cease to be those who can enforce the laws.

We are all agreed on the right of every woman, as of every man, to that individual development which shall make possible her fullest contribution to the social order. If it can be shown, as Ex-President Taft suggests, that women

have been unjustly prejudiced by governmental measures or by lack of them and that they could remedy this by their vote, or if they can show that, by the extension of the franchise to women either the general government would be better or stronger, or the existing electorate would be improved in its average moral tone, its intelligence, its political discrimination, its patriotism and attention to political duties, they make their case.

In a democracy the people are "bound to obedience under what is undoubtedly the will of the majority." It has yet to be shown that the majority of women are behind this demand for political activities. If women are intelligent enough to vote, are they not intelligent enough to know whether or not they are ready to assume the responsibilities of government? Those who insist that political justice demands woman's enfranchisement must recognize the right of woman to say whether or not she shall be drafted into political activities, a right based upon woman's concern in the establishment and maintenance of sound public policies.

Under the common law which we inherited from England, woman suffered many disabilities and inequalities. Without the woman's vote and under man-made laws these inequalities have been gradually reduced until the statute books of most states record the legal rights and exemptions of women, laws which discriminate in favor of women in regard to such matters as dower rights, alimony, and personal property and laws, which show that woman, instead of being "unjustly prejudiced by governmental measures," has been

given special protection under the law in recognition of the fact that as a woman she has a special service to perform for the state and the state must surround her with protective legislation in order that she may be most efficient where the state demands her highest efficiency; in order that the motherhood of the race may be protected and that future citizens shall have the birth right and the inheritance of a strong and vigorous childhood.

Because of her lowered physical and nervous vitality, the woman worker has had to be protected in her industrial life in order that the state might conserve her value as the woman citizen. Women cannot be treated exactly as men are, and motherhood, potential or actual, does determine woman's efficiency in industrial and social undertakings. Merely dropping a piece of paper in the ballot box is not a contribution to stable government unless that piece of paper be followed up by persistent and oftentimes aggressive activities in the field of political strife.

While the cry for political equality (which we contend is political inequality) has gone on, the civil and legal rights of women have been established without the woman's vote. Furthermore, it may be stated that wherever the votes of women have been added to the votes of men there has been no evidence of initiative in legislation distinct from the normal trend of such legislation in male suffrage states. Since this is so, the woman's vote would seem to be a waste of energy, because a duplication of effort, and there is no compensating gain to offset the economic loss of two people doing what one person can do.

The woman's vote has not been necessary to open the opportunities for higher education to her. Women like Mary Lyon, Emily Willard and Catherine Beecher, who had no concern with the woman suffrage agitation, did their splendid pioneer educational work and the woman of today reaps the harvest. The right of woman to enter the trades or professions has been won independent of her political activities. It is true that a dozen or more trades are closed to her, but her participation in these threatens her welfare as a woman and the state reserves the right to limit her activities therein. Male suffrage states have recognized the need of vocational training for woman and have opened trade schools wherein girls might become skilled workers and so be in a position to command higher wages. The appalling fact of woman in industry is that she is often so young

and so unskilled that she consequently commands a low wage. A survey of the wage earning women of the United States reveals the fact that nearly one-third of these are under voting age. The right of the industrial woman to organization for collective bargaining is recognized. No vote of woman was necessary to give her this equality with the working man. The right of woman to protection in the courts, the right of our women to claim the protection as citizens under the United States flag, is established on an absolute equality with man's similar right, without woman's political activities. The married woman has the right to hold property separately; to make contracts and to control her wages. Equality would demand that a husband should have a right to his own earnings, but society demands that his earnings shall be liable for the support and maintenance of his family while, except in some woman suffrage states, the wife's earnings are exempt from such liability. Even in those states where equal guardianship laws are not written on the statute books the practice of the courts, in those unfortunate instances where the family is disrupted, gives the guardianship of minor children to the mother provided she is a fit person and can provide means for their support. The divorce courts certainly reveal no inequalities in the granting of divorce to men and women, while the courts grant to men no provision corresponding to the woman's alimony.

The first commission to investigate a minimum wage for women was appointed in the male suffrage state of Massachusetts. The fundamental basis of a standard law for woman in industry is acknowledged to be the prohibition of night work, because of the damaged health of the working woman who is engaged in industrial pursuits by night and undertakes woman's work in the home by day. Nebraska, Massachusetts and Indiana blazed the path for this legislation. Within the last year, the great industrial states of New York and Pennsylvania have followed. In none of these states do women vote, but in all of these states public opinion has demanded that woman should not be handicapped in the offering of her highest efficiency. The state cannot permit the creation of the efficient worker at the cost of the efficient woman. *Equal* suffrage would demand that woman should enter into competition with man in a fair field with favor to none, but woman's welfare demands protection under the laws.

The best child labor laws are found in male suffrage states. Industrial and economic conditions have revealed the necessity of these laws. Public opinion in which the work of women played a noble part has urged their enactment and the votes of women have not been necessary to further the release of the child from the burden of industrial life.

The hideous white slave traffic and the dread social evil must be corrected by education rather than by political propaganda. Laws must follow as the knowledge of the extent of the evil awakens the public conscience and the moral sense of the people is aroused. Woman will find her work as the educator who develops a trained and scientific opinion, not as the politician who must control votes.

Women have a right to demand political responsibility if thereby the existing electorate would be improved "in its average moral tone, its intelligence, its political discrimination, its patriotism and attention to political duties." The burden of proving that the enlarged electorate would be an improved electorate rests on those who demand the change. Many women are more intelligent, more moral than many men, but the morality and intelligence of women and men of the same opportunities and environment strike about the same average and it has yet to be shown that the doubling of the electorate, the wise, the foolish, the patriotic, the self-seeking, would improve the electorate. The enfranchised woman seems to give even less attention than man to political duties, if we are to trust election returns. If woman suffrage is to increase the danger which confronts us today in the indifferent and stay-at-home voter, the patriotic women have the right to protest against the imposition upon women of responsibilities which would not be fulfilled. The right to vote carries with it a moral responsibility of exercising the franchise, therefore the majority of women who do not believe in woman suffrage have the right to protest against this obligation.

The life of the average woman is not so ordered as to give her first hand knowledge of those things which are the essentials of sound government. Clean streets and pure milk are sure to come as the knowledge of sanitary living increases. Tariff reform, fiscal policies, international relations, those large endeavors which men now determine, are foreign to the concerns and pursuits of the average woman. She is worthily employed in other departments of life, and the vote will not help her to fulfill her obligations therein.

The exceptional woman, who by some combination of circumstances is released from these obligations of the average woman, is today rendering public service which is distinctive because it is removed from personal, political ambitions. She has the right to serve the state and serves well in proportion to her freedom from party strife; she does not divert her efforts for the solution of social problems to the machinery of political organization. Herein lies the exceptional woman's distinctive contribution, not as a politician but as a disinterested factor working to render public service uncolored by political motives. Our exceptional American women are rapidly entering the ranks of those who thus serve the state. The patriotic women of England have been conspicuous in this sort of public service. One of the greatest of these was Octavia Hill, who more than any other one person helped to solve the problem of the housing of the poor. Out of her real experience she wrote:

I believe that men and women help one another because they are different, have different gifts and different spheres and that the world is made on the principle of mutual help. A serious loss to our country would arise if women entered into the arena of party struggle and political life. So far from raising the standard, I believe they would lose the power of helping to keep it up by their influence on the men who know and respect them. Political power would militate against their usefulness in the large field of public work in which so many are now doing noble and helpful service. This service is far more valuable than any voting power could possibly be. You can double the number of voters and achieve nothing, but have used up, in achieving nothing, whatever thought and time your women voters have given to such duties.

Let the woman be set on finding her duties, not her rights—there is enough of struggle for place and power, enough of watching what is popular and will win votes, enough of effort to secure majorities: if woman would temper this wild struggle, let her seek to do her own work steadily and earnestly.

It is woman's right to be exempt from political responsibility in order that she may be free to render her best service to the state. The state has surrounded her with protective legislation in order that she may attain her highest efficiency in those departments of the world's work for which her nature and her training fit her.